



# Citizenship Matters

How Children of Immigrants Will Sway the Future of Politics

---

By Manuel Pastor, Justin Scoggins, Vanessa Carter, and Jared Sanchez

July 2014

# Citizenship Matters

## How Children of Immigrants Will Sway the Future of Politics

---

By Manuel Pastor, Justin Scoggins, Vanessa Carter, and Jared Sanchez July 2014

# Contents

- 1 Introduction and summary**
- 4 Family and communities matter**
- 6 Economics matter**
- 8 Politics matter**
- 15 Conclusion**
- 18 Technical appendix**
- 22 Endnotes**

# Introduction and summary

Americans and politicians across the political spectrum have voiced their extraordinarily strong support for immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship.<sup>1</sup> But despite this consensus—and despite the June 2013 Senate passage of an immigration reform plan with a pathway to citizenship<sup>2</sup>—House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) has indicated he will not bring up immigration reform at all this year.<sup>3</sup>

As progress has stalled, immigration advocates have increasingly pressed President Barack Obama to grant a stopgap measure of administrative relief—that is, to enhance prosecutorial discretion, reduce deportations, and grant temporary legal status to some unauthorized immigrants. On June 30, with legislation stalled in the House, President Obama announced that he would use his executive authority by the end of summer to begin to fix the immigration system.<sup>4</sup>

Why the back and forth on immigration reform? After all, most economists agree that repairing the nation's immigration system will benefit the country's economy,<sup>5</sup> and that a path to citizenship would improve the fortunes and well-being of a large number of U.S. families.<sup>6</sup> But calculations about policy also hinge on politics, and some conservative pundits have worried that immigration reform will bring a slew of new voters who are less favorable toward a Republican platform. Equally so, a cynic might ask whether administrative relief could be politically helpful to Democrats since immigrants who would directly benefit are not in the country legally and therefore cannot vote.<sup>7</sup>

While House Republicans never produced a piece of legislation, a number of GOP leaders and members indicated they could support a legalization program for unauthorized immigrants, but not a pathway to citizenship.<sup>8</sup> This partly reflects the concerns of some Republican lawmakers that their chances of remaining in office might be threatened by a path to citizenship that eventually grants voting power to the more than 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States.<sup>9</sup>

In the long term, however, it is actually the children of these immigrants who could sway the future of politics in the country. There are approximately 5.5 million children currently living in the United States who have at least one undocumented parent, and an estimated 4.5 million of these children are U.S.-born citizens.<sup>10</sup> Given the minimum 13-year pathway to citizenship envisioned in the Senate bill passed last summer, millions of these young people will turn 18 and become eligible to vote long before their parents. It is these new voters who may reward those who pass immigration reform—or punish those who do not—simply by how they vote.

The potential effects are both short and long term. A recent Center for American Progress report by Patrick Oakford, titled “The Latino Electorate by Immigrant Generation,” examined the immediate political implications of not addressing immigration reform as well as the voting patterns of Latinos.<sup>11</sup> This report explores the consequences over multiple presidential electoral cycles, with an analysis focused on the children who might feel the current debate most sharply: the sons and daughters of today’s undocumented residents. We conclude that over the course of the next five presidential elections—by 2032, when all of today’s children of undocumented immigrants will have turned 18—the citizen children of the undocumented will have been able to cast nearly 11 million ballots.

Perhaps this is the 11 million to which political leaders should be paying attention. And yet the effect of today’s divisive immigration politics may be even greater than those numbers suggest, as historical evidence and current polling point to the fact that immigration is a touchstone issue in voting preferences for the children of all immigrants.<sup>12</sup> Widening the lens to include this entire group means a possible 15.4 million voters by 2032, who could potentially cast 41 million ballots over those election cycles. Shifting the focus slightly to consider all citizens of Latino or Asian American descent would bring the total number of new voters to 19.3 million, with a combined potential of 52 million presidential ballots cast. Five presidential cycles from now might seem a long way away, but consider this: President Bill Clinton was re-elected five cycles ago in 1996, and he is still a major figure in U.S. politics today.

It is these new voters who may reward those who pass immigration reform—or punish those who do not—simply by how they vote.

TABLE 1

## Children of immigrants will sway the future of U.S. politics

The number of children by group and the number of presidential votes they will potentially cast by 2032

Group	Potential voters as of 2032	Number of potential votes cast by 2032
Citizen children of undocumented immigrants	4.5 million	11 million
Citizen children of all immigrants	15.4 million	41 million
Citizen children of Latino or Asian American descent	19.3 million	52 million

Source: Author's calculations of American Community Survey data.

Immigration reform may be off the table for 2014, but make no mistake: Failing to enact—or even bring to a vote—immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship has significant repercussions and is simply misguided. It fails to recognize the mixed-status realities of many families, eliminates the potential financial benefits to these families and to society at large, and is likely to entrench a second generation against political actors perceived as holding up immigration reform progress. On the other hand, administrative action could provide much-needed relief to immigrant communities and a boost to politicians who support it. Ultimately, this report concludes that the country needs broader change: The immigration system remains broken and Americans want it fixed in a way that respects security, makes way for future immigration, and grants a pathway to citizenship.<sup>13</sup>

# Family and communities matter

A common media image of undocumented immigrants is that of recent arrivals, usually working off the books and surely without deep roots in their new country.<sup>14</sup> The data starkly contradict this image. In fact, a 2011 estimate suggested that nationwide, 63 percent of undocumented residents have actually been in the country for longer than 10 years.<sup>15</sup> More recent estimates suggest that nearly half of the undocumented immigrants in California have been there for more than 10 years.<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps most significantly, the undocumented are very much a part of the social fabric of the communities and states where they reside. Indeed, many live in households where residents have mixed citizenship status—that is, some of the family members are citizens, others are lawful permanent residents, or LPRs, while others are unauthorized. More than 16 million people live in families with at least one undocumented immigrant, a population that is one-third larger than the state of Illinois—a state where about one-quarter of all undocumented residents in the United States live.<sup>17</sup>

A 2011 study estimates that about 4.5 million children were born in the United States to at least one unauthorized immigrant parent.<sup>18</sup> This represents a growing share of the population: According to the Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project, the number of native-born children with at least one undocumented immigrant parent has more than doubled since 2000.<sup>19</sup> This increase is largely because the undocumented tend to be younger and therefore in the prime age cohort for family formation.<sup>20</sup>

The mixed nature of these communities is another reason why the dramatic rise in deportations under the Obama administration is troubling; more than 2 million people have been deported over the past five years.<sup>22</sup> While slightly fewer than 110,000 undocumented parents were removed in the 10-year period from fiscal year 1998 to 2007, nearly 90,000 were removed in FY 2012 alone—a number that affected more than 150,000 children.<sup>23</sup>

## The other citizen voters: Spouses and family members

This report focuses on the children of undocumented immigrants and their future voting potential. But the nature of mixed-status families means that a significant number of undocumented immigrants are married to U.S. citizens or have U.S. citizens in their families.

According to Latino Decisions polling, 13 percent of married or partnered adult undocumented immigrants are married or partnered to U.S. citizens, while a full 85 percent have a family member that is a citizen.<sup>21</sup> Extrapolating out from the 10 million unauthorized immigrant adults living in the country—a subset of the 11.7 million unauthorized immigrants, including children—means that 767,000 unauthorized immigrants have citizen spouses and 8.5 million have citizen family members.

Some recent analyses suggest that concern over higher deportation rates might be misplaced because removals of undocumented persons from the interior of the country have been on the decline, while removals of those caught near the border have increased.<sup>24</sup> The undocumented population has actually stabilized in recent years, so deportations from the interior are affecting a more integrated population, while deportations from the border are more frequently a result of “illegal re-entry”—those who have already lived in the United States and are coming back after being deported to reunite with their families.<sup>25</sup>

Legalization and relief from the threat of deportation are critical to immigrant families. But why is citizenship important? Is it enough to regularize the situation for children—including both legal status and citizenship—and legalize, but not naturalize, their parents?

From the perspective of the second generation, the answer would seem to be no. Citizenship often fosters a sense of confidence and belonging that can translate into civic and parental engagement,<sup>27</sup> which leads to a level of involvement in schools and education that is critical for the academic performance of children.<sup>28</sup>

But there is another reason why the Republican standards on immigration fall short: While simply gaining legal status raises the economic profile of immigrants and the nation as a whole, there is an additional citizen gain that is realized when parents are able to attain full citizenship. This citizen gain could matter greatly in reducing child poverty and improving family well-being. These and other economic effects are discussed in the next section of this report.

## Definitions

**Legalization:** The process by which unauthorized immigrants earn legal status.

**Administrative relief:** A temporary granting of legal status and a reprieve from deportation. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, which grants this status to eligible unauthorized youth, is one such program.

**Naturalization:** The process by which legal permanent residents become citizens.

**Citizen gain:** The estimated 8 percent to 11 percent increase in earnings that is associated with becoming a citizen—even holding all other individual factors constant—because of a wider range of available jobs, more specific skill development, and positive responses from employers.<sup>26</sup>



# Economics matter

Recent research suggests that immigrant earnings rise with legalization. Those with a more secure status are better able to switch jobs to more fully realize their talents, skills, and education at higher salaries, and are also better able to stand up for their rights at work.<sup>29</sup> But research also shows that there is a second income boost from citizenship—on the order of 8 percent to 11 percent over time.<sup>30</sup> This citizen gain occurs because citizenship allows workers an even wider range of employment possibilities, creates incentives for skills development, and sends positive signals to employers.

Numerous studies, including an analysis from the Congressional Budget Office, or CBO, have already highlighted the broader gains to the U.S. economy if reform is passed, including changes in direct spending and revenues that would decrease federal budget deficits by roughly \$800 billion from 2014 to 2033.<sup>31</sup> While many of these gains will come from increased immigration in the future, one of the more comprehensive studies focusing on the situation of the undocumented indicated that a road map to citizenship would bring about significant economic gains. These include gains in terms of economic growth, earnings, tax revenues, and jobs—all of which will not occur in the absence of immigration reform or which would be significantly less effective without a pathway to citizenship.<sup>32</sup>

The difference these gains would make in quality of life for the next generation could be significant. For example, in California, about two-thirds of children living in a family headed by an undocumented adult find themselves living 150 percent below the federal poverty line.<sup>33</sup> Any steps to boost these families' incomes would be a solid investment in both the country's future and the health and well-being of these American families.

Research suggests that between 1990 and 2006, the poverty rates of immigrants legalized under the Immigration Reform and Control Act, or IRCA, of 1986 fell dramatically: The poverty rate of immigrants ages 25 to 34 who were legalized

Numerous studies, including an analysis from the Congressional Budget Office, or CBO, have already highlighted the broader gains to the U.S. economy if reform is passed.

through the IRCA declined from 26 percent to 14 percent after legalization, with obvious positive effects for their children.<sup>34</sup> If such progress could be duplicated now, this could have a significant positive effect on the overall poverty rate in the United States, providing a much-needed boost to the economy.

As for administrative relief, it is harder to estimate exactly the broad economic gains that might be secured by expanding affirmative relief—that is, by granting a work permit and protection from deportation—for unauthorized immigrants. One study suggests that the current level of deportations could put an additional 83,000 households at risk of poverty and leave more than 125,000 children in a food-insufficient household annually.<sup>35</sup> In many cases, the people being deported are the primary breadwinners for their families.<sup>36</sup>

On the broader macroeconomic front, it is evident that companies are concerned about disruptions to their labor force—note the reactions of businesses in Nevada, Alabama, and Georgia to harsh laws in those states<sup>37</sup>—and that business is predominantly supportive of immigration reform.<sup>38</sup> As a result, it is hard to see how administrative relief could be anything but a positive step forward for the economy. It would grant more security to those who are already here, as well as to their employers. While a legislative solution to immigration reform that allows people to permanently gain legal status and citizenship has the greatest economic punch, administrative relief could boost the economic recovery for families and for the nation as a whole.

It is hard to see how administrative relief could be anything but a positive step forward for the economy.

## Politics matter

The idea of passing an immigration reform plan without a pathway to citizenship was prominently floated in an influential 2013 article by scholar Peter Skerry.<sup>39</sup> He argued that a legal-status-only approach was “splitting the difference” between those who wanted to deport undocumented immigrants and those who wanted to embrace them. The view was echoed in 2013 by former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush (R) in his own attempt—quickly panned by both the right and the left—to end the immigration wars by suggesting that a common ground solution might be to allow people without legal status to stay in the country but without the possibility of citizenship.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, this viewpoint gained traction in the House Republican leadership’s principles on immigration reform released in January 2014.<sup>41</sup> These principles have not made it into legislation, but they form an important marker for where House Republicans will likely stand on any future immigration reform proposal.<sup>42</sup>

A possible motive for this approach is to assuage the concerns of some conservatives who believe that any road map to citizenship is likely to yield “11 million Democratic voters.”<sup>43</sup> While not all Republicans believe granting citizenship will lead to these voters overwhelmingly supporting Democrats, the theory has been kept alive by some important conservative voices on talk radio, including Rush Limbaugh. He insists that these immigrants are “predestined to vote Democrat” and thus a path to citizenship is “a death sentence for the Republicans.”<sup>44</sup>

The intentions behind a split-the-difference approach as a way to bridge the gap between Democratic and Republican immigration ideas may be good, but the idea seems rooted in bad data and worse politics, ignoring three key factors:

- Polling of unauthorized immigrants by the Pew Research Center finds that close to 20 percent identify with or lean toward the Republican Party,<sup>45</sup> while Latino Decisions finds that 45 percent would be open to voting Republican if the party were to take the lead on immigration reform.<sup>46</sup>

- Because the path to citizenship envisioned in the Senate bill would take at least 13 years for most adult immigrants, both parties will have nearly four presidential election cycles—or more—to win over these voters-to-be.<sup>47</sup>
- The voters on which either party should focus are the U.S.-born children of immigrants who are going to be voters regardless of what happens with immigration reform.

---

## Future voting patterns and party affiliation of citizens

While some pundits believe that all unauthorized immigrants are predestined to become Democrats if granted citizenship, history and current polling reveals many may look favorably on political actors of either party who do their part for immigration reform. Some older Latino voters fondly recall Ronald Reagan as the president who signed the IRCA into law and enabled the subsequent path to legalization and citizenship. Some analysts have also argued that Republicans and immigrants—particularly Latino immigrants—have common ground on work ethic, family values, and faith.<sup>48</sup> For all these reasons, it is no surprise that former President George W. Bush—who attempted his own version of immigration reform while in office—was able to secure more than 40 percent of the Latino electorate in his re-election campaign in 2004.<sup>49</sup>

Indeed, even in the context of ongoing, divisive debate, a 2013 report based on the Pew Research Center’s National Survey of Latinos suggested that about 20 percent of unauthorized Latino immigrants “identify with (4 percent) or lean towards (15 percent) the Republican Party” and “about a quarter (27 percent) do not identify with or lean towards either party.”<sup>50</sup> That leaves only about half who currently identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party.

## President Reagan

### Hero of IRCA-era immigrants

On a student visa from Mexico, Manuel<sup>51</sup> was attending college in California when the Reagan administration passed the IRCA in 1986. He has vivid memories of watching the televised announcement of the bill’s passage and witnessing his Latino co-workers clapping, crying, and screaming with joy. The IRCA meant not only that they could seek legal, long-term employment, but also that they could own property and visit their families abroad.

Therefore, it should be no surprise that the IRCA—and particularly President Reagan’s signing of it—left a lasting impression. Because of it, Manuel was able to stay in the United States after he finished college. He secured permanent resident status, started a family, and eventually moved from California to Nashville, Tennessee. In some ways, his is the archetypal American immigrant story—working 15 hours each weekday at two full-time jobs. But it was made possible because of reform. Manuel still warmly remembers President Reagan as the man who signed the IRCA into law and who made it possible for him to remain in the United States and chase his dreams of independence and opportunity.

On the other hand, a backlash is possible. In California, the story is quite clear and offers a warning signal to the nation as demographic changes over the past 30 years have made the state majority-minority, foreshadowing developments in the broader U.S. population over the next 50 years. In his 1994 re-election campaign, former California Gov. Pete Wilson (R) chose to focus on his support for California Proposition 187, the so-called “Save Our State”—from undocumented immigrants—ballot initiative. As David Damore and Adrian Pantoja of Latino Decisions note, Gov. Wilson did indeed win re-election, but the campaign also engendered a significant backlash from and political mobilization among California’s Latino voters.<sup>52</sup>

## Republican National Convention delegate considers Democratic candidate because of immigration

Some Latino voters remain uncertain about either party, in large part due to immigration reform. Luis LaRotta, a then-31-year-old financier who was a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 2012, is one such voter.<sup>54</sup>

Fewer than 40 days before the 2012 elections, LaRotta had not yet decided who he would vote for come Election Day. On the one hand, he liked former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney’s (R) plans for job creation and health care, as they protected states’ rights and limited the growth of the federal government. On the other hand, LaRotta agreed with President Obama’s stance on immigration and praised

him for supporting the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors, or DREAM, Act, even while LaRotta agreed with Gov. Romney on border control. LaRotta tended to favor Republican policies, but he nevertheless remained an undecided voter due to Gov. Romney’s stance on immigration reform.

We do not know how LaRotta voted in 2012, nor with which party he now identifies. Yet he is an example of the undecided voter who leans Republican but is considering voting Democratic based purely on each party’s stance on immigration reform and a path to citizenship.

Even as Latino voter registration grew in the 1990s, the Republican Party continued to emphasize anti-immigrant ballot measures to a dwindling share of voters. Meanwhile, new Latino registrants flocked to the Democratic Party. The result was a state that had been accustomed to voting Republican—and had produced modern Republican presidents such as Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan—becoming a state in which no Republican currently holds statewide office.<sup>53</sup>

Other states are seeing high-profile races determined in part by candidates' views on immigration. In Colorado, the Latino vote was decisive in the 2010 Senate race, where Ken Buck—a Republican perceived as being anti-immigrant—lost to Sen. Michael Bennet (D).<sup>55</sup> In Nevada, Democratic Sen. Harry Reid won 90 percent of the Latino vote in his 2010 campaign, partly because opponent Sharron Angle attacked him for being soft on immigration and released racially charged ads picturing undocumented immigrants crossing the border.<sup>56</sup> And, of course, Republican presidential candidate and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney captured an abysmally low share of the Latino and Asian American vote—27 percent and 26 percent, respectively—after he called for undocumented immigrants to “self-deport.”<sup>57</sup>

Immigration is personal for these voters: In polling before the 2012 presidential election, for example, nearly three-quarters of Nevada's Latino voters reported knowing someone who was undocumented, while 41 percent knew someone who was detained or deported.<sup>58</sup> On a national scale, 63 percent of Latino voters know someone who is undocumented, while 39 percent know someone who has been detained or deported.<sup>59</sup> More importantly, a survey by Latino Decisions and Hart Research Associates of Latinos who voted in 2012 suggests that blocking reform with a pathway to citizenship would have a sharply negative effect on Latino perceptions of the Republican Party.<sup>60</sup>

Some pundits might dismiss this population as already lost to Republicans. However, the research reveals that half of Latino voters have indeed voted for a Republican candidate, and among those who have voted Republican in the past, many reported that blocking reform with a path to citizenship would sharply affect their view of the party.<sup>61</sup> For example, if the Republican leadership in the House is seen as blocking reform, prior Latino Republican voters will go from a 46 percent favorable and 47 percent unfavorable view of the party to 30 percent favorable and 61 percent unfavorable. That is a remarkable 30-point swing—enough to worry anyone who wants to win an election.<sup>62</sup>

### What about the kids?

Children who closely share the immigrant experience with their parents represent a significant electoral influence likely to personally feel the impact of public policies.<sup>63</sup> Research by Louis DeSipio, Frank Bean, and Ruben Rumbaut illustrates that a parent's status and naturalization increases political engagement by their kids.<sup>64</sup>

On a national scale, 63 percent of Latino voters know someone who is undocumented, while 39 percent know someone who has been detained or deported.

Let's start by considering those who are most directly affected. Roughly 4.5 million children of undocumented parents are U.S.-born and thus will automatically be entitled to vote when they turn 18.<sup>65</sup> Accounting for mortality—a modest factor for such a young population—that amounts to just fewer than 4.5 million people who will turn 18 and be eligible to vote by 2032, potentially casting a cumulative 11 million votes by that year.<sup>66</sup> This is the real 11 million that politicians should be focused on, rather than the 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the country right now.<sup>67</sup>

## Calculating the 11 million ballots cast by 2032

Our calculations suggest that between now and 2032, just under 4.5 million children of unauthorized immigrants will turn 18 and may potentially cast up to a collective 11 million votes in the next five presidential elections. How did we get to this number?

First, we applied mortality estimates—explained in the appendix—to account for reductions in the current population over the next 18 years. Then, to estimate the total number of new voters by election, we have aged in the population that will turn 18 between now and 2032. Consider two children, a boy age 17 and a girl age 5. The boy will turn 18 in one year and will be eligible to vote in the 2016 presidential election. He will also be able to vote in the next four elections in 2020, 2024, 2028, and 2032. The girl, by contrast, will only turn 18

in 2027 and as such will only be able to vote in the two presidential elections in 2028 and 2032.

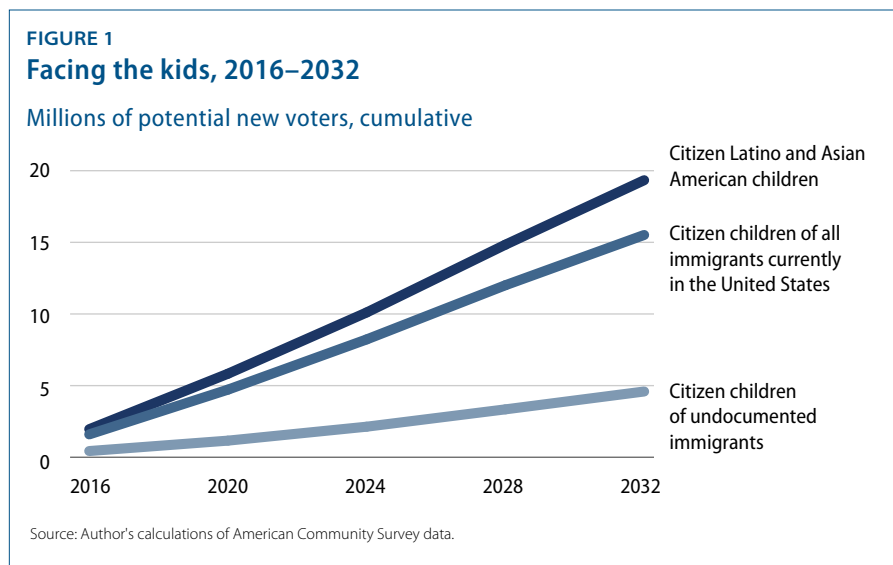
To calculate the total number of votes that this population will potentially cast, we created a model based on when each child of undocumented immigrants will turn 18 and then figured out how many presidential elections they will be able to vote in through 2032.

(Note: These are only potential ballots cast, which assumes that every new eligible voter will vote in each presidential election. Given that voter turnout rates overall run in the mid-50 percent to 60 percent range, these figures should be taken as the maximum potential votes cast.<sup>68</sup>)

Moreover, given the ways that naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, and undocumented immigrants are often woven together into the same households and communities, it makes sense to expand the group to all 15.4 million already-citizen children in immigrant families who will be of voting age by 2032. Shifting the lens slightly, given the often racialized nature of the debate, there are 19.3 million young Latinos and Asian Americans who are currently U.S. citizens and will be of voting age by that same year.<sup>69</sup>

Figure 1 below illustrates the rise of these three groups of potential voters by 2032: the citizen children of undocumented immigrants, the citizen children of immigrant parents, and all citizen Latino and Asian American children. Several useful ways to think about the timing are that by the end of 2032 and over the course of five presidential elections:

- The citizen children of the currently undocumented will have been able to cast 11 million ballots.
- All citizen immigrant children will have been able to cast more than 41 million ballots.
- All citizen Latino and Asian American youth will have been able to cast nearly 52 million ballots.



How will this next America vote? Already, 74 percent of young Latinos ages 18 to 34 think that “many Republicans in Congress” hold negative attitudes toward immigrants; they perceive anti-immigrant statements as reflective of the party and not just of a few select politicians. Nearly 60 percent of second-generation Latinos indicate that they will be less likely to vote for Republicans in future elections if reform with a path to citizenship is blocked.<sup>70</sup>



There are important moderate pro-reform voices in the Republican Party, however, who are trying to appeal to this emerging group of voters. Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) has noted his belief that “the fundamental principle of this legislation has to contain a path to citizenship,” and enough Republican senators agreed with him to pass S.744 in 2013 by a 68-to-32 margin.<sup>71</sup> Republican strategist Whit Ayres has worried about the long-term slippage of the party if it does not improve its standing with nonwhite voters,<sup>72</sup> and Karl Rove has suggested that the immigration issue “keeps Latinos who otherwise agree with us from hearing us fully.”<sup>73</sup> The Republican Growth and Opportunity Project—better known as the Republican Party “autopsy” of the 2012 presidential defeat—suggested that immigration reform was critical to the future of the party.<sup>74</sup>

Yet these more moderate voices have been overwhelmed by party dynamics as a whole. While some calculations suggest that holding back on immigration reform is better for the midterm elections, that strategy is shortsighted and will cost Republicans in the long term.

Even with the politics of the issue within the House Republican caucus making it too difficult to move forward on legislation this year, immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship is still smart policy now and wise politically for the future. While administrative relief may not be everything communities need or want, it too represents a platform to support families, strengthen the economy, and win political support.

While administrative relief may not be everything communities need or want, it too represents a platform to support families, strengthen the economy, and win political support.

# Conclusion

Immigration reform today is at a standstill. But in the future—when members of Congress work up the courage to pass this much-needed legislation—a full pathway to citizenship is the only viable way forward.

It is not clear what political problem blocking citizenship is meant to solve. Polls, including from conservative Fox News,<sup>75</sup> suggest that a path to citizenship is popular with both Republicans and the broader public. The nonpartisan Public Religion Research Institute also found that 63 percent of respondents crossing party and religious lines favored legislation to create a pathway for undocumented immigrants, while only 14 percent supported legal residency with no option for citizenship. Indeed, the support for citizenship among the American public is so strong that nearly 70 percent of Americans believe the 13-year path laid out in the Senate bill is too long.<sup>76</sup>

In contrast with the conservatives who think about immigration reform purely in terms of the number of new voters created, the real focus should not be on the immigrants themselves but instead on their families and their children who are already U.S.-born citizens—all of whom are likely to direct their frustrations at those who held back the dreams of their relatives, friends, and communities.

Immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship makes sense on family, economic, and moral grounds. It is supported by business, labor, and civic leaders, and is popular with voters and voters-to-be. It is rare to find this winning combination, and both parties should capitalize on the reality of this situation to come together to pass common-sense immigration reform.

---

## About the authors

**Dr. Manuel Pastor** is a professor of sociology and American studies and ethnicity at the University of Southern California, or USC. He currently directs the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity, or PERE, and the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration, or CSII, at USC. Pastor's research has generally focused on issues of the economic, environmental, and social conditions facing low-income urban communities and the social movements seeking to change those realities. He holds a doctorate in economics from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, has written several books, and speaks nationally on issues including demographic change, economic inequality, and community empowerment.

**Justin Scoggins** is the data manager at the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity and the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration at USC. He holds a master's degree in applied economics and finance from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Scoggins currently manages the broad array of datasets used in PERE/CSII research, and provides guidance on and conducts quantitative analyses called for by various projects in environmental justice, regional equity, and immigrant integration.

**Vanessa Carter** is the senior data analyst at the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity and the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration at USC. Carter holds a master's degree in urban planning from UCLA and is a student at Fuller Theological Seminary. Carter's current work focuses on research in immigrant integration, faith-based organizing, regional equity, and movement building. She has co-authored several journal articles, reports, and a book chapter with PERE/CSII staff and affiliated faculty.

**Jared Sanchez** is a data analyst at the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity and the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration at USC. He holds a master's degree in urban planning from USC. In addition to racial desegregation research, Sanchez' work currently focuses on using quantitative methods on topics such as regional equity, immigrant integration, and rapid response requests for community-based organizations.

---

## Acknowledgements

This report was published with support for the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration's analytic work by the James Irvine Foundation. The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of Center for American Progress and the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration and do not necessarily reflect the position of the James Irvine Foundation. The Center for American Progress produces independent research and policy ideas driven by solutions that we believe will create a more equitable and just world.

## Technical appendix

Figure 1 shows projections of new eligible voters for each presidential election year from three groups:

- U.S.-citizen children—under 18 years old—of undocumented parents
- U.S.-citizen children with at least one immigrant parent
- U.S.-citizen children of Asian American or Latino descent

We should note that for this report we include Pacific Islanders in the broader Asian American category; they comprise about 4 percent of the combined total, are generally included with Asians in broader data on political preferences, and are likely to have similar sensitivities around immigration issues so this seemed like an appropriate grouping.<sup>77</sup>

To estimate the cumulative number of new eligible voters of these various categories, we calculated the age distributions for each group of U.S.-citizen children from the 2012 American Community Survey, or ACS, Public Use Microdata Sample, or PUMS, from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, or IPUMS.<sup>78</sup>

Given the lack of information in the ACS on parents' legal status, the age distribution of the estimated 4.5 million U.S.-citizen children of undocumented immigrants was proxied by the age distribution of U.S.-citizen children with at least one noncitizen parent. This distribution was applied to the estimated base of 4.5 million children of undocumented immigrants in generating our estimates. We took the 2012 ACS data as a reasonable representation of the 2014 totals and age distributions and then made straightforward projections for each group of U.S.-citizen children by assuming that everyone ages in place; for example, the number of 17-year-olds became our projection of new voters in 2015, the number of 16-year-olds became the projection for 2016, and so on.

This is likely to slightly understate the total impact since the youth population probably grew modestly between 2012 and 2014. Finally, we applied estimates of mortality for the population—although, as might be guessed, these are not large adjustments for such a young population. Still, that explains why our estimates of the total number of aged-in potential voters who are, say, children of immigrants, is slightly less than the total number of those children in the 2012 ACS; to keep matters clear, we consistently report the mortality-adjusted numbers in the text.

We should note that this approach is likely to underestimate the actual numbers of citizen children of immigrants and citizen Latino and Asian American children in the future given that it does not consider the impact of future immigration. This was intentional, however, as we intend for our projections to reflect only those children who are likely to be impacted in some way by the current immigration debate, so it makes sense to include only those currently residing in the United States. Because we end the analysis in 2032, we also conveniently exclude those projected to be born to parents currently residing in the United States, as they will not yet have crossed the threshold to the voting age of 18.

These numbers of new youth voters are far above any reasonable estimates of undocumented residents who will become citizens under the Senate plan. As a thought experiment, we also projected who might become eligible to vote and when based on the Senate bill. To do so, we drew upon several data sources, including the projections of numbers of new legal permanent residents under S.744 from the currently undocumented immigrants included in a CBO analysis,<sup>79</sup> a Pew Research Hispanic Trends Project report,<sup>80</sup> and two reports from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Immigration Statistics, or OIS, describing naturalization rates for immigrants who were legalized under the IRCA.<sup>81</sup>

While the newest estimates suggest that the number of undocumented immigrants living in the country is somewhere between 11 million and 12 million,<sup>82</sup> it is likely that about 10 million of these are adults. As it turns out, some percentage of these individuals will not meet the time-in-country and other requirements in the Senate bill to obtain the initial legal status of a registered provisional immigrant, or RPI, or agricultural worker, and thus the CBO estimates that among those who entered the United States as adults—age 16 and older—only 6.5 million will make the initial cut.<sup>83</sup> Those going the RPI route will then need to maintain income and employment over time, pay a series of fees and back taxes, and only after 10 years may apply to be lawful permanent residents, or LPRs.

The agricultural workers would be able to become LPRs after five years. Given the mix and the requirements, the CBO also estimates that only 5.3 million of these adults—both the RPIs and the agricultural workers—will attain LPR status by 2028. There are another 1.5 million DREAMers—some adults and some youth—and we discuss them separately below.<sup>84</sup>

To calculate who would naturalize from this group of 5.3 million people, we took the projected numbers of new LPRs by time period and route—RPI or agricultural worker—from the CBO report<sup>85</sup> and applied two scenarios of cumulative naturalizations over time based on published OIS reports of naturalization rates for immigrants who were granted status under the IRCA. The lower-bound scenario assumes cumulative naturalization rates over time that are similar to those who were legalized under the IRCA—reaching 53 percent after 15 years of eligibility—while the upper-bound scenario assumes cumulative naturalization rates over time that are similar to all non-Mexican IRCA immigrants—reaching 68 percent after 15 years of eligibility—along with a steeper rise in naturalizations during the first four years of eligibility. Front loading in the first four years seemed appropriate: Given the much longer wait time before one is able to obtain LPR status under S.744 compared with the IRCA, there may be some pent-up demand for naturalization. The higher cumulative share after 15 years of eligibility of 68 percent was chosen to ensure that our upper-bound estimates were overestimates given that non-Mexicans have historically had much faster naturalization rates than Mexicans<sup>86</sup> and that the majority of the undocumented are of Mexican origin.<sup>87</sup>

Another group of adults will follow a slightly different path—those who are currently 18 and older but arrived in the country before the age of 16. These adult DREAMers total about 500,000, and they face two potential paths: either follow the regular RPI path to LPR status lasting 10 years or go through an accelerated five-year path that would allow them to become LPRs—and later citizens—more quickly, provided they commit to military service or pursue a college degree. The CBO provides estimates of those who are likely to obtain LPR status via the latter accelerated route, and we distributed these to the adult DREAMer population, with some also added to the group of younger DREAMers ages 13 and older. As for rates of naturalization, we took the upper-bound estimate for the regular RPIs as the lower-bound estimate for this group and devised another upper bound based on full naturalization after 15 years. We saw less reason for this group, for whom this country has been their formative experience, to eschew naturalization.

To estimate the number of new eligible voters from the 1 million currently undocumented children—*younger DREAMers*—we assumed that this group would naturalize at an even faster rate once eligible, given that most of them are growing up in the United States now, likely already view themselves as Americans, and may have few home country loyalties that would induce them to delay naturalization. We thus used the upper bound for the older *DREAMers* as the lower bound for this group and applied an even faster cumulative naturalization rate for the upper bound—one that assumes 95 percent would be naturalized within five years of attaining LPR status and that 100 percent would be naturalized after 10 years. As for the choice of a faster path, the incentives fall off for the youngest in this group so we assumed a faster path might be chosen only by those ages 13 or older, and we applied the age distribution of noncitizen children younger than 18 in the United States derived from the 2012 IPUMS ACS to estimate the number of *DREAMers* between the ages of 13 and 17.

The results are strikingly different from the specter of “11 million Democratic voters.” Given the long path to citizenship status—and after making modest adjustments for mortality—we estimate that only a trickle of new voters who will benefit from naturalization will hit the polls in 2024 and 2028. By 2032, reasonable estimates suggest that there will be 1.8 million to 3 million new voters as a result of S.744. Of course, given the time blocks in the legislation, it is probably more appropriate to stretch the time frame out to 2040, but even then the number is 3.4 million to 4.3 million.

In short, a reasonable estimate of the maximum amount of new voters from legalization in the year 2040 is still below the virtually assured number of new voters in 2032 who are U.S.-citizen children of the undocumented and simply aged their way into being able to politically support those who supported their parents.



---

## Endnotes

- 1 Philip Wolgin and Evelyn Galvan, "Immigration Polling Roundup: Americans of All Political Stripes Want Congress to Pass Immigration Reform," Center for American Progress, March 4, 2014, available at <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2014/03/04/85102/immigration-polling-roundup-americans-of-all-political-stripes-want-congress-to-pass-immigration-reform/>.
- 2 *Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act*, S.744, 113th Cong. 1 sess. (Government Printing Office, 2013), available at <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s744/text>.
- 3 See, for example, Puneet Kollipara, "Wonkbook: Cantor's stunning loss likely means immigration reform is dead," *The Washington Post Wonkblog*, June 11, 2014, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2014/06/11/wonkbook-cantors-stunning-loss-likely-means-immigration-reform-is-dead/>; Steven Dennis, "Immigration Bill Officially Dead: Boehner Tells Obama No Vote This Year, President Says," *Roll Call Blog*, June 30, 2014, available at <http://blogs.rollcall.com/white-house/immigration-bill-officially-dead-boehner-tells-obama-no-vote-this-year/?dzc>.
- 4 David Nakamura and Ed O'Keefe, "As reform stalls, administration eyes acting on its own to ease deportations, lawmakers say," *The Washington Post*, April 11, 2014, available at [http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/as-reform-stalls-administration-eyes-acting-on-its-own-to-ease-deportations-lawmakers-say/2014/04/10/5e7785aebf2e-11e3-b574-f8748871856a\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/as-reform-stalls-administration-eyes-acting-on-its-own-to-ease-deportations-lawmakers-say/2014/04/10/5e7785aebf2e-11e3-b574-f8748871856a_story.html); Christi Parsons and Lisa Mascaro, "Obama says he will overhaul immigration without Congress' help," *The Los Angeles Times*, June 30, 2014, available at <http://www.latimes.com/nation/politics/politicsnow/la-na-pn-obama-immigration-20140630-story.html#page=1/>.
- 5 See for example, Ezra Klein, "Worried about the economy? Then pass immigration reform," *The Washington Post Wonkblog*, January 31, 2013, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/01/31/worried-about-the-economy-then-pass-immigration-reform/>.
- 6 Robert Lynch and Patrick Oakford, "The Economic Effects of Granting Legal Status and Citizenship to Undocumented Immigrants" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2013), available at <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/report/2013/03/20/57351/the-economic-effects-of-granting-legal-status-and-citizenship-to-undocumented-immigrants/>; Manuel Pastor and Justin Scoggins, "Citizen Gain: The Economic Benefits of Naturalization for Immigrants and the Economy" (Los Angeles: Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration, University of Southern California, 2012), available at [http://csii.usc.edu/documents/citizen\\_gain\\_web.pdf](http://csii.usc.edu/documents/citizen_gain_web.pdf).
- 7 For example, Rep. Michael Burgess (R-TX) suggested that reform will produce "11 million Democrats." See Tim Alberta, "Rubio Stares Down the Right Over 'Undocumented Democrats,'" *National Journal*, June 18, 2013, available at <http://www.nationaljournal.com/congress/rubio-stares-down-the-right-over-undocumented-democrats-20130618>.
- 8 Benjy Sarlin, "Boehner Warns Immigration Reform Is in Serious Danger," *MSNBC*, February 6, 2014, available at <http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/boehner-immigration-reform-trouble#>.
- 9 See, for example, Rush Limbaugh, "The Limbaugh Amnesty Plan," *The Rush Limbaugh Show*, March 19, 2013, available at [http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/daily/2013/03/19/the\\_limbaugh\\_amnesty\\_plan](http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/daily/2013/03/19/the_limbaugh_amnesty_plan).
- 10 Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, "Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010" (Washington: Pew Research Hispanic Trends Project, 2011), available at <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2011/02/01/unauthorized-immigrant-population-brnational-and-state-trends-2010/>.
- 11 Patrick Oakford, "The Latino Electorate by Immigrant Generation: The Rising Influence of Children of Immigrants" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2014), available at <http://americanprogress.org/immigration/report/2014/06/12/91446/the-latino-electorate-by-immigrant-generation/>.
- 12 Gary Segura and Matt Barreto, "How the National Exit Poll Badly Missed the Latino Vote in 2010," *Latino Decisions*, November 4, 2010, available at <http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/2010/11/04/how-the-national-exit-poll-badly-missed-the-latino-vote-in-2010/>; Matt A. Barreto and Geoff Garin, "House GOP Inaction on CIR Damaging Republican Party Image," *Latino Decisions*, July 18, 2013, available at <http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/2013/05/03/immigration-reform-gops-big-chance-to-deliver-on-latino-outreach/>.
- 13 Wolgin and Galvan, "Immigration Polling Roundup."
- 14 Dalia Fahmy, "Expensive Aliens: How Much Do Illegal Immigrants Really Cost?," *ABC News*, May 21, 2010, available at <http://abcnews.go.com/Business/illegal-immigrants-cost-us-100-billion-year-group/story?id=10699317>.
- 15 Paul Taylor and others, "Unauthorized Immigrants: Length of Residency, Patterns of Parenthood" (Washington: Pew Research Hispanic Trends Project, 2011), available at <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2011/12/01/unauthorized-immigrants-length-of-residency-patterns-of-parenthood/>.
- 16 Manuel Pastor and Enrico A. Marcelli, "What's at Stake for the State: Undocumented Californians, Immigration Reform, and Out Future Together" (Los Angeles: USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity, 2013), p. 9, available at [http://csii.usc.edu/documents/whats\\_at\\_stake\\_for\\_the\\_state.pdf](http://csii.usc.edu/documents/whats_at_stake_for_the_state.pdf).
- 17 Taylor and others, "Unauthorized Immigrants," p. 6; Bureau of the Census, "State & County QuickFacts: Illinois," available at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/17000.html> (last accessed July 2014).
- 18 Passel and Cohn, "Unauthorized Immigrant Population."
- 19 Taylor and others, "Unauthorized Immigrants," p. 6.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 5. The median age of undocumented adults 36.2 years old versus 46.1 for documented immigrant adults and 46.5 for U.S. native adults.
- 21 Latino Decisions, NALEO, and America's Voice Education Fund, "America's Voice Education Fund Survey of Latino Undocumented Immigrants March 2013" (2013), available at [http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/NALEO\\_AV\\_Undoc\\_Results.pdf](http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/NALEO_AV_Undoc_Results.pdf).

- 22 Marc R. Rosenblum and Doris Meissner, "The Deportation Dilemma: Reconciling Tough and Humane Enforcement" (Washington: Migration Policy Institute, 2014), available at <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/deportation-dilemma-reconciling-tough-humane-enforcement>.
- 23 Human Impact Partners, "Family Unity, Family Health: How Family-Focused Immigration Reform Will Mean Better Health for Children and Families" (Oakland, CA: Human Impact Partners, 2013), available at <http://www.humanimpact.org/projects/hia-case-stories/family-unity-family-health-an-inquiry-on-federal-immigration-policy/>; Office of Inspector General, *Removals Involving Illegal Alien Parents of United States Citizen Children* (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2009), available at [http://www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/OIG\\_09-15\\_Jan09.pdf](http://www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/OIG_09-15_Jan09.pdf).
- 24 Brian Bennett, "High deportation figures are misleading," *The Los Angeles Times*, April 1, 2013, available at <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-obama-deportations-20140402,0,3514864.story#axzz2ysVLSdQz>.
- 25 Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, "Illegal Reentry Becomes Top Criminal Charge," June 10, 2011, available at <http://trac.syr.edu/immigration/reports/251/>.
- 26 Pastor and Scoggins, "Citizen Gain."
- 27 Rob Paral, "Benchmarks of Immigrant Civic Engagement" (Chicago: Rob Paral and Associates, 2010), available at <http://www.robparal.com/downloads/RPA%20report%20to%20The%20Carnegie%20Corporation.pdf>.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Congressional Budget Office, "The Economic Impact of S. 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act" (2013), available at <http://cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/44346-Immigration.pdf>; Robert Lynch and Patrick Oakford, "The Economic Effects of Granting Legal Status and Citizenship to Undocumented Immigrants" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2013), available at <http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/EconomicEffectsCitizenship-1.pdf>.
- 30 Pastor and Scoggins, "Citizen Gain."
- 31 Congressional Budget Office, "The Economic Impact of S. 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act."
- 32 Lynch and Oakford, "The Economic Effects of Granting Legal Status and Citizenship to Undocumented Immigrants."
- 33 Using 150 percent of the poverty line as an indicator is more reasonable measure for poverty in such a high-cost state as California. Pastor and Marcelli, "What's at Stake for the State."
- 34 Rob Paral, "Economic Progress via Legalization: Lessons from the Last Legalization Program" (Washington: Immigration Policy Center, 2009), available at [http://immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/Economic\\_Progress\\_via\\_Legalization\\_-\\_Paral\\_110509.pdf](http://immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/Economic_Progress_via_Legalization_-_Paral_110509.pdf). Paral's sample includes "unauthorized immigrants who gained legal status." His analysis then surely subsumes those who just gained legal status and also those who subsequently naturalized.
- 35 Human Impact Partners, "Family Unity, Family Health."
- 36 Joanna Dreby, "How Today's Immigration Enforcement Policies Impact Children, Families, and Communities" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2012), available at <http://americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/report/2012/08/20/27082/how-todays-immigration-enforcement-policies-impact-children-families-and-communities/>.
- 37 Marshall Fitz and Angela Maria Kelley, "Stop the Conference: The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Conference Cancellations Due to Arizona's S.B. 1070" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2010), available at <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/report/2010/11/18/8657/stop-the-conference/>; Tom Baxter, "How Georgia's Anti-Immigration Law Could Hurt the State's (and the Nation's) Economy" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2011), available at <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/report/2011/10/04/10486/how-georgias-anti-immigration-law-could-hurt-the-states-and-the-nations-economy/>; Tom Baxter, "Alabama's Immigration Disaster: The Harsh Law in the Land Harms the State's Economy and Society" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2012), available at <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/report/2012/02/15/11117/alabamas-immigration-disaster/>.
- 38 Matt Egan, "Silicon Valley Goes to Washington to Take on Immigration Reform," *Fox Business*, March 27, 2014, available at <http://www.foxbusiness.com/economy-policy/2014/03/27/silicon-valley-goes-to-washington-to-take-on-immigration-reform/>.
- 39 Peter Skerry, "Splitting the Difference on Illegal Immigration," *National Affairs*, Winter 2013.
- 40 Jeb Bush and Clint Bolick, *Immigration Wars: Forging an American Solution* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2014).
- 41 *The New York Times*, "Text of Republicans' Principles on Immigration," January 30, 2014, available at [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/31/us/politics/text-of-republicans-principles-on-immigration.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/31/us/politics/text-of-republicans-principles-on-immigration.html?_r=0).
- 42 See, for example, Kollipara, "Wonkbook: Cantor's stunning loss likely means immigration reform is dead"; Dennis, "Immigration Bill Officially Dead: Boehner Tells Obama No Vote This Year, President Says."
- 43 Alberta, "Rubio Stares Down the Right Over 'Undocumented Democrats.'"
- 44 Limbaugh, "The Limbaugh Amnesty Plan."
- 45 Eileen Patten and Mark Hugo Lopez, "Are Unauthorized Immigrants Overwhelmingly Democrats?" Pew Research Center, July 22, 2013, available at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/07/22/are-unauthorized-immigrants-overwhelmingly-democrats/>.
- 46 Matt Barreto, "New poll: Latino voters evaluate Congress through their actions on immigration bill," *Latino Decisions*, June 6, 2013, available at <http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/2013/06/06/new-poll-latinovoters-evaluate-congress-through-their-actions-on-immigration-bill/>.

- 47 Respondents were asked how likely they would be to vote for Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) in the 2016 presidential election specifically relating to his leadership role in passing S. 744. Fifty-four percent of Latino voters said they were likely to vote for Sen. Rubio, including 50 percent of Latinos who voted for President Obama in 2012, 46 percent of Latino independents, and 55 percent of Latino voters ages 18 to 34. However, absent any prompting about Sen. Rubio working to ensure a final immigration bill is passed, he failed to even reach the 30 percent support mark among Latinos. See Matt Barreto, "2016 Forecast: Rubio, Bush, Ryan Have Chance to Win over 40 percent of Latino Vote," *Latino Decisions*, July 7, 2013, available at <http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/2013/07/02/2016-forecast-rubio-bush-ryan-have-chance-to-win-over-40-of-latino-vote/>.
- 48 Alfonso Aguilar, "On Latinos, Listen to the Gipper," *Politico*, May 5, 2010, available at <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0510/36754.html>.
- 49 Roberto Suro, Richard Fry, and Jeffrey S. Passel, "Hispanics and the 2004 Election: Population, Electorate and Voters" (Washington: Pew Research Hispanic Trends Project, 2005), available at <http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/reports/48.pdf>.
- 50 Patten and Lopez, "Are Unauthorized Immigrants Overwhelmingly Democrats?"
- 51 Hispanic Nashville, "'Manuel' remembers November 1986: Reagan's Amnesty," November 2, 2011, available at <http://www.hispanicnashville.com/2011/11/remem-bering-amnesty.html>.
- 52 David Damore and Adrian Pantoja, "Anti-Immigrant Politics and Lessons for the GOP from California" (Seattle: Latino Decisions, 2013), available at <http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Prop187Effect.pdf>.
- 53 Moreover, Matt A. Barreto, Ricardo Ramirez, and Nathan D. Wood's research on the rapid increase in Latino voting in California shows that it was not IRCA naturalizations, but rather demographic and mobilization variables that primarily pulled Latinos into the electorate and spurred their voting. Matt A. Barreto, Ricardo Ramirez, and Nathan D. Woods, "Are Naturalized Voters Driving the California Latino Electorate? Measuring the Effect of IRCA Citizens on Latino Voting," *Social Science Quarterly* 86 (4) (2005): 792-811.
- 54 Patricia Kilday Hart, "Young Houston couple in Tampa to save the world," *The Houston Chronicle*, August 29, 2012; Griselda Nevarez, "Some Latino voters are still undecided as presidential election nears," *Voxxi*, September 30, 2012.
- 55 Some attribute the Latino awakening there to state-wide anti-immigrant policies, especially a 2006 law that required local law enforcement to report anyone arrested for criminal offense and suspected of being undocumented to immigration authorities. Philip Wolgin and Ann Garcia, "Immigration Is Changing the Political Landscape in Key States" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2013), available at <http://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/ImmigrationPolitics.pdf>.
- 56 Latino Decisions, "Nevada 2010 Results," available at <http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/recent-polls/nevada-2010-results/> (last accessed July 2014); Segura and Barreto, "How the National Exit Poll Badly Missed the Latino Vote in 2010."
- 57 Mark Hugo Lopez and Paul Taylor, "Latino Voters in the 2012 Election" (Washington: Pew Research Hispanic Trends Project, 2012), available at <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/11/07/latino-voters-in-the-2012-election/>; Shane Goldmacher, "Obama Overwhelmingly Won Asian-American Vote," *National Journal*, November 8, 2012, available at <http://www.nationaljournal.com/politics/obama-overwhelmingly-won-asian-american-vote-20121108>.
- 58 America's Voice, "New Five State Latino Battleground Poll Highlights Democrats' Lead, Growing Voter Enthusiasm," Press release, July 27, 2012, available at [http://americasvoice.org/press\\_releases/new-five-state-latino-battleground-poll-highlights-democrats-lead-growing-voter-enthusiasm/](http://americasvoice.org/press_releases/new-five-state-latino-battleground-poll-highlights-democrats-lead-growing-voter-enthusiasm/).
- 59 Matt Barreto, "Latino voters personal connections to immigration reform," *Latino Decisions*, March 18, 2013, available at <http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/2013/03/18/latino-voters-personal-connections-to-immigration-reform/>.
- 60 Barreto and Garin, "House GOP Inaction on CIR Damaging Republican Party Image."
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Ibid., p. 22.
- 63 Paral, "Benchmarks of Immigrant Civic Engagement"; Oakford, "The Latino Electorate by Immigrant Generation"; Rob Paral & Associates, "The New American Electorate: The Growing Political Power of Immigrants and Their Children" (Washington: Immigration Policy Center, 2008), available at <http://immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/NewCitizenVotersWEBversion.pdf>.
- 64 Louis DeSipio, Frank Bean, and Ruben G. Rumbaut, "Immigration Status and Naturalization Across Generations: The Consequences of Parental Unauthorized Migration or Naturalization on the Civic and Political Behaviors of 1.5 and 2nd Generation Young Adults in Los Angeles," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington D.C., September 1, 2005.
- 65 We estimated from the 2012 IPUMS ACS that about 85 percent of children with a noncitizen parent are citizens.
- 66 This figure declines slightly as we adjust for mortality. See technical appendix.
- 67 See the discussion of the likely voters as a direct result of immigration reform in the technical appendix.
- 68 Michael P. McDonald, "Turnout in the 2012 Presidential Election," *The Huffington Post*, February 11, 2013, available at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-p-mcdonald/turnout-in-the-2012-presi\\_b\\_2663122.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-p-mcdonald/turnout-in-the-2012-presi_b_2663122.html).
- 69 As noted in the technical appendix, both these figures are based on calculations made using the 2012 IPUMS ACS file. Given that the 2012 ACS is the most recent data available to generate the measures reported, and for ease of reporting, we refer to the estimates in the text as current figures. In our actual calculations, we include a mortality adjustment, which is minor because this is a young population.
- 70 Barreto and Garin, "House GOP Inaction on CIR Damaging Republican Party Image."

- 71 Elise Foley, "John McCain On Immigration: Not Giving Up On Path To Citizenship," *The Huffington Post*, August 27, 2013, available at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/27/john-mccain-immigration\\_n\\_3824807.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/27/john-mccain-immigration_n_3824807.html).
- 72 Dave Cook, "GOP Strategist: Appeal to Latino voters is party's great challenge," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 8, 2012, available at [http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Politics/monitor\\_breakfast/2012/0308/GOP-strategist-Appeal-to-Latino-voters-is-party-s-great-challenge](http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Politics/monitor_breakfast/2012/0308/GOP-strategist-Appeal-to-Latino-voters-is-party-s-great-challenge).
- 73 John Roberts, "For Republicans To Learn How To Win Over Hispanic Voters, They Need To Look To Texas," *Fox News Latino*, February 19, 2014, available at <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/politics/2014/02/19/for-republicans-to-learn-how-to-finally-win-over-hispanic-voters-need-to-look/>.
- 74 Republican National Committee, "Growth and Opportunity Project" (2013), available at [http://goproject.gop.com/RNC\\_Growth\\_Opportunity\\_Book\\_2013.pdf](http://goproject.gop.com/RNC_Growth_Opportunity_Book_2013.pdf).
- 75 Fox News, "Fox News Poll: Voters say US still in recession, glad they know Snowden secrets," January 22, 2014, available at <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/interactive/2014/01/22/fox-news-poll-voters-say-us-still-in-recession-glad-know-snowden-secrets/>.
- 76 Robert P. Giloth, Daniel Cox, and Juhem Navarro-Rivera, "What Americans (Still) Want From Immigration Reform, American Public Opinion" (Washington: Public Religion Research Institute, 2013), available at [http://publicreligion.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/2013-Immigration\\_Phase2.WEB-copy.pdf](http://publicreligion.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/2013-Immigration_Phase2.WEB-copy.pdf); Julia Preston, "In Report, 63 percent Back Way to Get Citizenship," *The New York Times*, November 25, 2013, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/25/us/in-report-63-back-way-to-get-citizenship.html>.
- 77 Asian American Justice Center and others, "Behind the Numbers: Post-Election Survey of Asian American and Pacific Islander Voters in 2012" (2013), available at <http://www.naasurvey.com/resources/Presentations/2012-aapipes-national.pdf>.
- 78 Steven J. Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-Readable Database]" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>.
- 79 Congressional Budget Office, "The Economic Impact of S. 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act"; Lynch and Oakford, "The Economic Effects of Granting Legal Status and Citizenship to Undocumented Immigrants."
- 80 Passel and Cohn, "Unauthorized Immigrant Population."
- 81 Bryan C. Baker, "Naturalization Rates among IRCA Immigrants: A 2009 Update" (Washington: U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Immigration Statistics, 2010), available at <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/irca-natz-fs-2009.pdf>; Nancy Rytina, "IRCA Legalization Effects: Lawful Permanent Residence and Naturalization through 2001" (Washington: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2002), available at <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/irca0114int.pdf>.
- 82 Jeffrey S. Passel, D'Vera Cohn, and Ana Gonzalez-Barrera, "Population Decline of Unauthorized Immigrants Stalls, May Have Reversed" (Washington: Pew Research Hispanic Trends Project, 2013), available at <http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/2013/09/Unauthorized-Sept-2013-FINAL.pdf>.
- 83 Congressional Budget Office, "Cost Estimate: S. 744 Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act" (2013), available at <http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/s744.pdf>.
- 84 The figure for new LPRs by 2028 includes 3.9 million adjusting from RPI status between 2025 and 2028, and 1.4 million adjusting from agricultural worker status by 2023.
- 85 Congressional Budget Office, "S.744 Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act" (2013), pp. 21–23, available at <http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/s744.pdf>.
- 86 Manuel Pastor and others, "Nurturing Naturalization: Could Lowering the Fee Help?" (Los Angeles: Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration, 2013), available at [http://csii.usc.edu/documents/Nurturing\\_Naturalization\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://csii.usc.edu/documents/Nurturing_Naturalization_final_web.pdf).
- 87 Passel, Cohn, and Gonzalez-Barrera, "Population Decline of Unauthorized Immigrants Stalls, May Have Reversed."

---

---

The Center for American Progress is a nonpartisan research and educational institute dedicated to promoting a strong, just and free America that ensures opportunity for all. We believe that Americans are bound together by a common commitment to these values and we aspire to ensure that our national policies reflect these values. We work to find progressive and pragmatic solutions to significant domestic and international problems and develop policy proposals that foster a government that is “of the people, by the people, and for the people.”

The Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration, or CSII, at the University of Southern California aims to remake the narrative for understanding and the dialogue for shaping, immigrant integration in America. Our intent is to identify and evaluate the mutual benefits of immigrant integration for the native born and immigrants and to study the pace of the ongoing transformation in different locations. CSII brings together three emphases: scholarship that draws on academic theory and rigorous research; data that provides information structured to highlight the process of immigrant integration over time; and engagement that seeks to create new dialogues.

---

---

